

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-12. (Cancelled)

Claim 13. (Currently amended) A cross link system ~~of claim 11~~ wherein for stabilizing and connecting a pair of spinal rods comprising a bar having a longitudinal axis with a first connector on one end and a second connector on the other end, said first connector having a first groove transverse to said longitudinal axis of said bar for passage of a spinal rod, a first lock mounted on said first connector with a first actuator arm adapted to extend into said first groove, said first arm movable to obstruct said first groove to frictionally engage said first connector and one of the spinal rods, said second connector having a second groove transverse to said longitudinal axis of said bar for passage of another spinal rod, said bar comprises a first shaft and a second shaft, said first shaft and said second shaft joined by a pin, said pin having a U-shape with upstanding free ends supporting a portion of said first shaft, said second shaft having a bore, said free ends of said pin passing through said bore, a fastener engaging said free ends and said bore securing said pin and said first shaft

and said second shaft together, said first shaft has a portion of reduced thickness along said longitudinal axis adjacent to said bore in said second shaft, said reduced thickness defined by a shoulder on each end, a piston located in said reduced thickness and extending into said bore, said piston having opposed flanges extending along said reduced thickness, said flanges adapted to contact said shoulders during relative movement of said first shaft and said second shaft in said longitudinal axis and translate shear forces to said piston.

Claim 14. (Currently amended) A cross link system ~~of claim 12~~ wherein for stabilizing and connecting a pair of spinal rods comprising a bar having a longitudinal axis with a first connector on one end and a second connector on the other end, said first connector having a first groove transverse to said longitudinal axis of said bar for passage of a spinal rod, a first lock mounted on said first connector with a first actuator arm adapted to extend into said first groove, said first arm movable to obstruct said first groove to frictionally engage said first connector and one of the spinal rods, said second connector having a second groove transverse to said longitudinal axis of said bar for passage of another spinal rod, a second lock is mounted on said second connector with a second actuator arm adapted to extend into said second groove, said second arm shaped to obstruct said second

groove to frictionally engage said second connector and another of the spinal rods, said bar comprises a first shaft and a second shaft, said first shaft and said second shaft joined by a pin, said pin having a U-shape with upstanding free ends supporting a portion of said first shaft, said second shaft having a bore, said free ends of said pin passing through said bore, a fastener engaging said free ends and said bore securing said pin and said first shaft and said second shaft together, said first shaft has a portion of reduced thickness along said longitudinal axis adjacent to said bore in said second shaft, said reduced thickness defined by a shoulder on each end, a piston located in said reduced thickness and extending into said bore, said piston having opposed flanges extending along said reduced thickness, said flanges adapted to contact said shoulders during relative movement of said first shaft and said second shaft in said longitudinal axis and translate shear forces to said piston.

Claim 15. (Cancelled)

Claim 16. (Currently amended) A cross link system ~~of claim 15~~ wherein for stabilizing and connecting a pair of spinal rods comprising a bar having a longitudinal axis with a first connector on one end and a second connector on the other end, said first connector having a first groove transverse to said longitudinal

axis of said bar for passage of a spinal rod, a first lock mounted on said first connector with a first actuator arm adapted to extend into said first groove, said first arm movable to obstruct said first groove to frictionally engage said first connector and one of the spinal rods, said second connector having a second groove transverse to said longitudinal axis of said bar for passage of another spinal rod, a second lock is mounted on said second connector with a second actuator arm adapted to extend into said second groove, said second arm shaped to obstruct said second groove to frictionally engage said second connector and another of the spinal rods, said bar comprises a first shaft and a second shaft, said first shaft and said second shaft joined by a pin, said pin having a U-shape with upstanding free ends supporting a portion of said first shaft, said second shaft having a bore, said free ends of said pin passing through said bore, a fastener engaging said free ends and said bore securing said pin and said first shaft and said second shaft together, a piston located between said upstanding free ends and extending into said bore, said piston having opposed flanges extending along said first and second shaft, said first shaft has a portion of reduced thickness along said longitudinal axis adjacent to said bore in said second shaft, said reduced thickness defined by a shoulder on each end, said piston located in said reduced thickness and extending into said bore, said flanges adapted to contact said shoulders during relative

movement of said first shaft and said second shaft in said longitudinal axis and translate shear forces to said piston.

Claim 17. (Original) A cross link system of claim 16 wherein a first key is movably mounted on said first connector in contact with said first lock, said first key blocking said first actuator arm from disengagement when said first actuator arm obstructs said first groove, a second key is movably mounted on said second connector in contact with said second lock, said second key blocking said second actuator arm from disengagement when said second actuator arm obstructs said second groove.